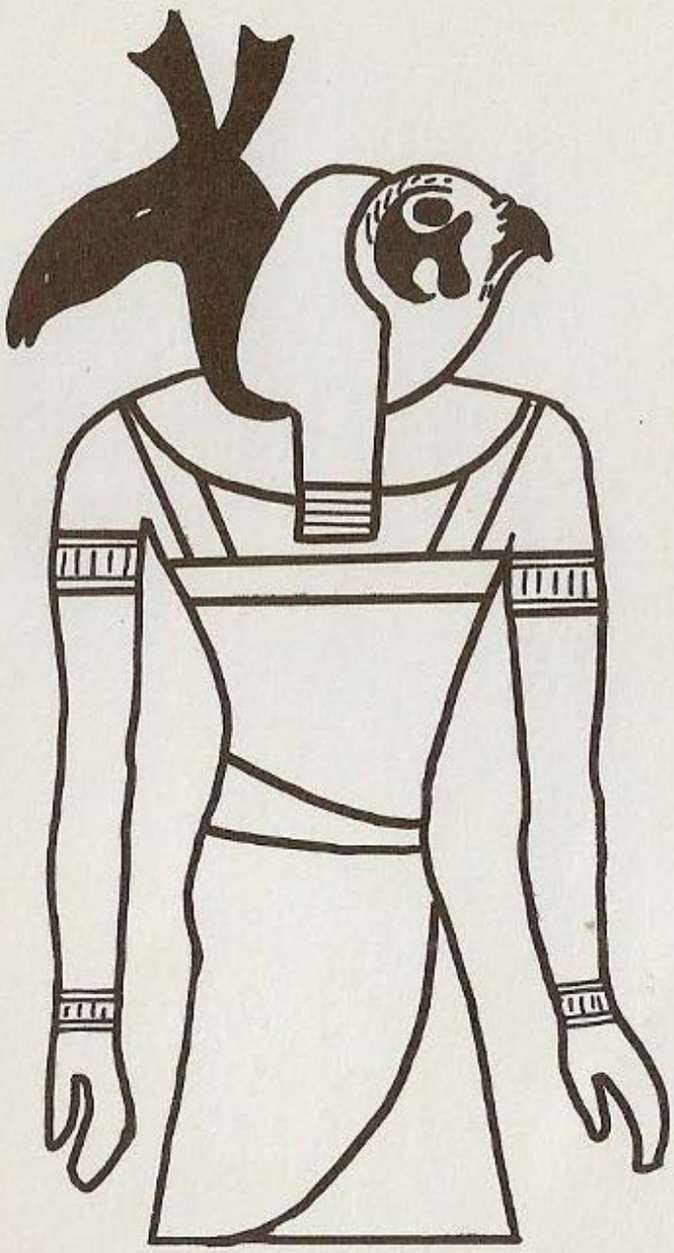
the ROHMER REVIEW



No. 7

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Until the spring of 1971, R. A. W. Lowndes was editor of several fantasy fiction magazines, of uniformly high quality and poor distribution. One of these magazines was *Startling Mystery Stories*, and a feature of the later issues of this magazine was a series of editorial essays on famous characters in mystery fiction. The series began with brief treatments of Sherlock Holmes and Solar Pons, then went on to extended commentaries on Auguste Dupin, Philo Vance, Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple, Father Brown, and Nero Wolfe. The subject of the essay in issue #19 was to have been Fu Manchu, but the publishers killed the magazine before that issue was printed. I wrote to Mr. Lowndes, seeking to obtain the essay for presentation in the *Review*, but discovered that a TRR subscriber, Tom Collins, had been quicker on the draw. Thus "The Immortal Enemy" first appeared in Mr. Collins' magazine *Is*. The latter was published for distribution to the members of the Spectator Amateur Press Society. The overlap in readership of *Is* and *The Rohmer Review* is small enough to make feasible the reprinting of the essay in this issue. With Mr. Lowndes' permission, a few notes have been added at the end. I have also used the publication of this essay as an excuse to present the Fu Manchu Checklist, which several readers have requested.

The brief extract from "Pipe Dreams" on pages 11-12 represents Sax Rohmer's only public utterance on the subject of his play *Secret Egypt*. For those readers puzzled by the reference in this item to Ion Swinley as "a fellow Artists Rifle": the Artists Rifles were the company in the British Army to which Sax Rohmer was assigned during his brief service in World War I.

The article on *The Eye of Siva* in TRR #6 included a brief paragraph about D. A. Clarke-Smith, who also appeared in *Secret Egypt*. Perusal of a recent anthology of plays (*Best Mystery and Suspense Plays of the Modern Theatre*, edited by Stanley Richards; Dodd, Mead, 1971) discloses that Clarke-Smith remained active into the 1950s; he played an important role in the original London cast of Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution*. The same volume of plays provides a mention of S. J. Warmington, who played a subsidiary role in *The Eye of Siva*. In the original London production of Somerset Maugham's *The Letter*, he played the unfaithful lover who was shot dead by Gladys Cooper within the first thirty seconds of the play. (To be quite fair about the matter, he did return for a flash-back sequence in the last act... .) ●

THE IMMORTAL ENEMY

by

Robert A. W. Lowndes

It was around 1928 (meaning that it could have been either 1927 or 1929, but the earlier or middle date seems more likely than the later one) that I went into a big drugstore in Stamford, Conn., one evening to see a counter piled high with books, with a sign over them warning purchasers not to read them after midnight. The books were *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu*, *The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu*, and *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. (I believe that in those days it was "Fu-Manchu," but somewhere along the line the hyphen was dropped and now you do not see it at all.[1])

Later, the first talking film based upon the stories came out: *The Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu*, starring Warner Oland, with Neil Hamilton as Dr. Petrie. Not having read the books as yet, I found the movie quite wonderful, and still fancy Oland as Fu Manchu, even though he does not follow the description at all. "Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan... ." And, to my everlasting regret, I missed the following film, *The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu*, although I did get to see *Daughter of the Dragon*, wherein Anna May Wong plays Fah Lo Suee, and her father is finally killed off for keeps.[2]

Perhaps it is just as well that Warner Oland did not resemble the description of Fu Manchu, for these films were brutal travesties of this delightful series. *The Mask of Fu Manchu* was somewhat closer to the story and Boris Karloff closer to the description, but the three early films have the banal motivation of personal revenge upon the Petrie family, with some sinister incidents taken from the novels. If they have not been revived, the neglect may be quite justly deserved.

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Numerous commentators have stressed the obvious fact that Nayland Smith is not much of a detective, and it's too bad that Fu Manchu wasn't up against someone whose competence was at least within a few streets of Sherlock Holmes. The complaint is not unfounded in some ways, but I find it irrelevant; why should these stories be blamed for something they were never intended to be in the first place? They are not detective stories at all; they are mystery-adventure-suspense novels wherein the matter of the reader anticipating any part of the mystery or its solution is quite unimportant. The questions are always, "How will Fu Manchu be foiled this time?" and "How will Fu Manchu get away in the end?"---for it is the insidious doctor, not his antagonist, who is the star. This is underlined by the fact that the narrators change during the series.

The first three novels were told by Dr. Petrie, and one suspects that Sax Rohmer may originally have intended to let the series close with the end of *The Hand of Fu-Manchu*. "In the dim light I bent over a battered and torn mass of timber that had once been the bow of a boat; and in letters of black and gold I read: 'S.Y. *Chanak-Kampo*.'"

At the end of the first novel it is apparent that Fu Manchu has escaped; in the second, Kâramanèh shoots the doctor and he is presumed dead; Smith, Petrie and Kâramanèh are now in danger only from Fu Manchu's servants in the vicinity. However, Petrie does not get to examine the body, so that when we are told specifically in *The Hand of Fu-Manchu* that our old enemy is "the man with the limp," it is not difficult to swallow.

Shan Greville is the narrator of *Daughter of Fu Manchu* and *The Mask of Fu Manchu*. This makes sense in more ways than one; *Daughter* was written nearly fourteen years after *The Hand of Fu-Manchu*, and the insidious doctor no longer considers Petrie either a fool or someone to be eliminated. There is thus no point in his taking an active---or starring---part in the series thereafter; the author is keeping up to date. More than that, Dr. Petrie *isn't* a fool, and for full effect we need to see events through the eyes of someone who does not know as much about Fu Manchu as Petrie does. Rohmer thus solved two problems at once--eliminating the necessity of the narrator having to be someone who has learned nothing, and giving a fresh viewpoint for the reader who remembers the earlier stories. Explanations to Petrie at this point would be tedious; to Greville, they are natural.

Alan Sterling is the narrator of *The Bride of Fu Manchu*. *The Trail of Fu Manchu* and *President Fu Manchu* are told in the third person, though Sterling reappears in the first of these two; Mark Hepburn is the romantic lead in the second. Bart Kerrigan is the narrator of *The Drums of Fu Manchu* and *The Island of Fu Manchu*, while *The Shadow of Fu Manchu*, *Re-Enter Fu Manchu*, and *Emperor Fu Manchu* are told in the third person. Whether

Re-Enter or *Emperor* is actually the final book in the series remains mysterious to me. *Re-Enter Fu Manchu* is copyright 1957 by the estate of Sax Rohmer; *Emperor Fu Manchu*'s earliest copyright is 1959, by Fawcett Publications. In the Pyramid soft cover series (all of them now available, I believe) both are called "the twelfth of the perilous adventures of Nayland Smith." I have heard from a seemingly reliable source that *Re-Enter Fu Manchu* is actually the final one that Rohmer wrote. Perhaps some reader can furnish us with proof; lacking that, I prefer to consider *Emperor Fu Manchu* the final one---partly, I'll admit, because I consider it the better of the two.[3]

On the whole, I find the novels told in the first person superior to the others, although one of the finest in the series for me, *President Fu Manchu*, is a third-person story. Since these are not, as I said before, detective stories in the mystery-puzzle sense, but thrillers, the personal viewpoint throughout a novel makes for far greater effectiveness, even if other matters may be handled better in the third-person novels. Fu Manchu himself remains of surpassing interest. Nayland Smith, I'll admit, we more or less have to put up with (although he improves), but Dr. Petrie is sympathetic from the start. Tony McKay, romantic lead in *Emperor Fu Manchu*; Brian Merrick, lead in *Re-Enter Fu Manchu;* Dr. Morris Craig of *Shadow of Fu Manchu;* and Mark Hepburn of *President Fu Manchu* are all well handled---particularly McKay---but something is lacking nonetheless, even as something is lacking in the otherwise splendid handling of Holmes and Watson in *His Last Bow.*

Sax Rohmer (for the newcomer perhaps we'd better mention that his actual name was Arthur Sarsfield Ward) kept the series up to date, each novel taking place in the "present". His writing style also changed with the times---the series runs from 1912 or 1913 (when *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* was first published) to the late 50s. Obviously the style of the first three novels became less appropriate to the average reader of thrillers (and the series was slanted toward the average reader, not the *aficionado* who might like to see more with the pre-Great War flavor), and in this sense there is something of a loss, but such loss is made up for by other strengths which appear as we go along.

I want to say that I do recommend all thirteen of the novels, for even *Re-Enter Fu Manchu* has its positive aspects. It is not a deterioration or self-caricature in the sense that some of the later Tarzan novels are; it is just less strong than others, *Emperor Fu Manchu* in particular.

The evolution of the character of Dr. Fu Manchu is a fascinating one. This is not a template series at all, and the general notions about the doctor that one gets from movies, etc., as nothing but a super-scientific monster genius are entirely false. When you've read one, you haven't read them all by any means.

He is malignant and mysterious, of course, in the first three novels; and there about the only thing that can be said in his favor is that you can trust him to keep his word, to the letter. If he gives you a five minute leeway you can be sure that you will be safe for five minutes---but don't count on a second beyond that. Nonetheless, no matter how inconvenient his word may turn out to be for him, under no circumstances will he violate it, no matter to whom it is given. Here is the Confucian ideal of the superior man, the perfect Chinese gentleman, personified. An interesting sidelight on this comes up in *President Fu Manchu*, which I'll get to in detail later, but I want to say now that it is quite normal for Fu Manchu's servants to fear him and trust him absolutely at the same time.

We find in the early trio that Fu Manchu is an emissary, under obedience to the organization of which he is a part---the superbly sinister Si-Fan.[4] He is a mandarin, and there are suggestions that the doctor may be a member of the Manchu dynasty, which was overthrown in 1911. He is subject to recall, discipline, even execution by the Si-Fan. In *The Return of Dr. Fu-Manchu*, the doctor tells Smith and Petrie, "You come at an opportune time ... when the greatest man in China flatters me with a visit. In my absence from home, a tremendous honor has been conferred upon me, and, in the hour of this supreme honor, dishonor and calamity have befallen... ." He has been admitted by the Sublime Prince (the Manchu Pretender?) to the Sacred Order of the White Peacock.

What is the calamity? "Learn, my two dear friends, that the sacred white peacock brought to these misty shores for my undying glory, has been lost to me! Death is the penalty for such sacrilege; death shall be my lot, since death I deserve."

His only hope is to resign all offices, withdraw from all honors, and put an end to Nayland Smith, who is regarded as the chief enemy by his confreres. But Petrie has the winning card. He has found the white peacock, quite by accident; he cries out, "Stop!" just as Fu Manchu is about to clap his hands, whereby Smith will be dragged away and done in without delay. And Fu Manchu replies softly, "Dr. Petrie ... I shall always listen to you with respect."

This is quite an elevation from the doctor's opinion of Petrie as a fool, for whom he was sorry in the first novel of the series. Alas, memory falters---I have read a million other words since I started, two years ago, to go through the entire series; perhaps some reader can tell us precisely what Petrie does to alter Fu Manchu's first judgement. I believe it is also in *The Return* that Fu Manchu is addressed as "Prince" by a visitor from China, but it may be later in the series.

In any event, Fu Manchu is head of the Council of Seven (the Si-Fan) a dozen-plus years later, at the time of *Daughter of Fu Manchu*, wherein the main plot is Fah Lo Suee's attempt

to gain control of this organization for her own purposes.

The objectives of the Si-Fan may vary so far as any particular novel is concerned, but I think it is safe to assume that the over-all aim of restoring China in her greatness as a nation dedicated to the principles of Confucius, and thus a light to all mankind, is never entirely forgotten. In *The Drums of Fu Manchu* (1934) the doctor's aim is to preserve peace, through either controlling or removing such dictators as Rudolf Adlon who threaten war. In *The Island of Fu Manchu* (1940), the doctor tells Bart Kerrigan, "I shall restore the lost grandeur of China. When your civilization, as you are pleased to term it, has exterminated itself ... I shall stir. Out of the fire I shall rise. The red dusk of the West will have fallen, the golden dawn of the East will come... ." Yet in this novel he is not only willing but eager to help the Allies against the Axis. He is anti-Communist, even though not averse to co-operation with Soviet agents for his own purposes. And he might have put an end to the People's Republic of China in *Emperor Fu Manchu* had not the tireless and sometimes tiresome Nayland Smith (for whom, by now, Fu Manchu has come to have the highest respect, as we must ourselves; there has to be something more than sheer luck here) interfered. However, the West (as represented by Smith) seems to feel that a restored Manchu Dynasty in China, under Emperor Fu Manchu, would be little improvement over its (then and still) present condition. I must confess that I find the question moot at least.

How often is Fu Manchu "killed" during the series? We noted that his shooting by Kâramanèh in *The Return* was at best indecisive, but death at sea in *The Hand* seemed almost certain. Thereafter, only on two occasions is his demise suggested at the end of a novel---in *President Fu Manchu* and *The Island of Fu Manchu*. In all the others, we know at the end of the book that he has escaped. He has discovered a means of renewed and extended mortality; everyone else in the series ages normally.

That there is a subsurface mutual respect between Smith and the doctor is unmistakable; and as time goes along, Fu Manchu's attempts to kill his enemy seem to become more routinely taken; one can almost feel that a slight margin for escape has intentionally been left open (not to mention the number of times when Smith has been a helpless prisoner in the doctor's domain) and that Fu Manchu isn't too angry about it. He really wants to win Smith over to his own side, or to win the current campaign despite Smith, who is, shall we say, the commanding general of the anti-Fu Manchu forces. Others do more of the running around and getting into scrapes as Smith grows older, though at no time is he confined to the armchair. And be it noted that Smith also passes up opportunities to kill Fu Manchu. Though not a Confucian, Nayland Smith has his honor too. This may be annoying to the reader at times, but in a sense it is one of the things

these stories are about---two divergent views of life and civilization which nonetheless agree that dishonor is worse than defeat. This is one of the reasons why Smith and Fu Manchu are momentarily in agreement in relation to common enemies, totalitarians for whom "honor" is just a word with which to deceive someone who believes there is such a thing.

Fah Lo Suee, Fu Manchu's rebellious daughter, known also as Madame Ingomar and later as Korêani, makes a fascinating sub-menace in the series, inasmuch as at times Smith and Fu Manchu are moving simultaneously against her and each other. She first appears in *Daughter of Fu Manchu*, of course, at the end of which we have this vivid portrait of the doctor, nearly fourteen years after his apparent demise at the end of *The Hand of Fu-Manchu*. Petrie is not present; Shan Greville is telling the story:

"It was [the figure] of a very tall old man; emaciated to a degree which I had hitherto associated only with mummies. His great height was not appreciable at first glance, by reason of the fact that he stooped very much, resting his weight on a stout stick. He wore a plain black garment, resembling a cassock, and a little black cap was set on his head... .

"His skull---his fleshless yellow skull---was enormous. I thought that such a brain must be that either of a madman or of a genius. And his face, a map of wrinkles, resembled nothing so much as the shrivelled majesty of the Pharaoh Seti I who lies in the Cairo Museum!

"Deeply sunken eyes emitted a dull green spark."

After the confrontation with Fah Lo Suee, Fu Manchu tells Smith that for the moment they stand together. He says:

"'My methods are not your methods. Perhaps I have laughed at your British scruples. Perhaps a day will come, Sir Denis, when you will join in my laughter. But, as much as I have hated you, I have always admired your clarity of mind and your tenacity. You were instrumental in defeating me, when I had planned to readjust the centre of world power. No doubt you thought me mad---a megalomaniac. You were wrong.'

"He spoke the last three words in a low voice---almost a whisper.

"'I worked for my country. I saw China misruled, falling into decay; with all her vast resources, becoming prey for carrion. I hoped to give China that place in the world to which her intellect, her industry, and her ideals entitle her. I hoped to *awaken* China. My methods, Sir Denis, were bad. My motive was good.'"

And, speaking of his wayward daughter, who certainly had no such motives in her attempt to wrest control of the Si-Fan into her own hands, he says, "'The woman you know as Fah Lo Suee---it was her pet name in nursery days---is my child by a Russian mother. In her, Sir Denis, I share the sorrow of Shakespeare's King Lear... . She has reawakened a power which I had buried.

I cannot condemn her. She is my flesh. But in China we expect, and *exact*, obedience. The *Si Fan* is a society older than Buddhism and more flexible. Its ruler wields a sword none can withstand. For many years *Si Fan* has slumbered. Fah Lo Suee has dared to awaken it!'"

Then he turns to Shan Greville and tells him that, misdirected, at such a crisis of history as this (1931, when the Japanese invasion started, with Manchuria[5]), it could mean another world war. Fu Manchu says, "'I dragged myself from retirement' ---he looked again at Nayland Smith---'to check the madness of Fah Lo Suee. Some harm she has done. But I have succeeded. Tonight, again, I am lord of the *Si Fan!*'"

Fu Manchu would never retire again, nor apparently permit the Si-Fan again to become dormant. And Madame Ingomar remains a menace, though apparently submissive to her father in *The Mask of Fu Manchu* and *The Bride of Fu Manchu*. In *The Trail of Fu Manchu* she goes too far again, and is slated for execution along with Smith, who is a prisoner at that moment. It is here that Smith confesses that he loves her, and she acknowledges that she reciprocates. Fah Lo Suee, however, is not killed, except as a person with a will of her own. She plays a part in both *The Drums of Fu Manchu* and *The Island of Fu Manchu*, and is now known as Korêani, one of Fu Manchu's zombies---which are not magically animated corpses but brain-washed cataleptics. I do not recall her demise in the latter novel, but am pretty sure that she does not reappear in the final trio of novels.

In *The Bride of Fu Manchu*, when Alan Sterling first sees the doctor he describes him as "aged but ageless," for Fu Manchu has made use of biological discoveries to effect something of a renewal and extension of vitality. (He is never the lecherous sort of villain, although he did intend to have a child by Fleurette---"the bride"---for eugenic-dynastic purposes.)

Dr. Petrie and Kâramanèh (now Mrs. Petrie) made guest appearances in *Daughter of Fu Manchu*. I believe that in later books Mrs. Petrie is only referred to. Petrie himself is a featured player, with a most important part, in *The Bride of Fu Manchu*. Herein we learn of the tragedy that befell him and Kâramanèh in the years following the end of *The Hand of Fu-Manchu:* their only child, a girl, was kidnapped in babyhood and all efforts to find her were in vain. The discerning reader will realize rather soon that Fleurette is the missing girl, whom Fu Manchu has raised as a foster daughter, and to whom he has been a kind father.

Petrie apparently dies in his attempts to find a remedy for the gruesome new disease that Fu Manchu is experimenting with, but the doctor saves him. In the following novel, *The Trail of Fu Manchu*, wherein the tale of Fleurette is completed to a satisfactory conclusion, Petrie saves a dying Fu Manchu at the end of the story. If Petrie appears in any of the later novels,

I believe it is little more than to wave at the audience.

One of the finest scenes in the series is in *President Fu Manchu*, where another side of the doctor comes forward. Moya Adair is in his service because of fear, which Fu Manchu regrets, but acknowledges that she serves him admirably. The hold he has on her is her small child, Robbie, who calls the doctor "Yellow Uncle." Fu Manchu has guaranteed his safety, but toward the end of the novel, Robbie is on the point of death due to a physician's incompetence. Fu Manchu performs an operation while Mark Hepburn, there to arrest him, witnesses "a feat of surgery unique in his experience. Those long yellow fingers seemed to hold magic in their tips. Dr. Fu Manchu, the supreme physician, was also the master surgeon. He was, as Hepburn believed (for Nayland Smith's computation he found himself unable to accept), a man of over seventy years of age. Yet with unfailing touch, exquisite dexterity, he had carried out an operation in a way which Hepburn's training told him to be wrong. It had proved to be right. Dr. Fu Manchu had performed a surgical miracle---under hypnosis!"

There follows an example of why, should you ever have occasion to shake hands with Dr. Fu Manchu, there would be no point in counting your fingers afterward; the only thing to do would have been to have them photographed before. Before the operation Fu Manchu assures Hepburn he has nothing to worry about, says to him, "Call your headquarters at the Regal Tower. Ensure us against interference. Allay any doubts respecting your own safety: I shall require you here. Conceal the fact that I am present, but accept responsibility for handing me over to the law. I give you---personally---my parole.'"

So later, when Smith and others show up, Fu Manchu delivers instructions for Robbie's further care, then says, "'I desire, Captain Hepburn, to be arrested by Sir Denis Nayland Smith, who has a prior claim. Will you be good enough to hand me over to him?'

"Hepburn spoke hoarsely.

"'Yes... . Smith, this is your prisoner.'"

The alert reader will realize that since Fu Manchu gave his parole to Hepburn personally, and since Hepburn turned him over to Sir Denis Nayland Smith---to whom the doctor had promised nothing---he is now free to escape if he can, since he is no longer Hepburn's prisoner. Which he does in fine style very shortly thereafter, right under their noses.

I hope that I am correct in my feeling that *Emperor Fu Manchu* is the final novel in the series that Rohmer wrote, for at its end Nayland Smith has finally obtained a list of every Si-Fan lodge master in China. This would be the proper occasion for the doctor to retire again, for I do believe Smith is correct in thinking that the loss of this list will shatter Fu Manchu's dream empire. However, I'm prepared to accept proof that

Re-Enter Fu Manchu takes place later, if adequate proof is forthcoming.

In any event, it's a wonderfully entertaining series of novels which should not be berated as poor detective fiction when it isn't supposed to be detective fiction in the first place. It deserves better than the travesties of it that have appeared on film and in the comic strips, etc.[6] Fu Manchu has become a household word, like Sherlock Holmes, recognizable to millions who may never have read a page of the original stories and who associate these wonderful characters only with the vile caricatures that have been so prevalent.

I'm fortunate in having a peculiar memory. I can recall irrelevant details for many years after reading a story or a series, while the more important details drop out. This is embarrassing at times, as it gives the appearance of remembering far more than I actually do about almost anything I may have read. But the advantage is that I can re-read and rediscover the pleasures of such diversions as these a few years from now.

NOTES (by the Editor)

[1] The name "Fu Manchu" is hyphenated in the titles and throughout the texts of the first three books in the series, and in the omnibus volume *The Book of Fu-Manchu*. These hyphens are retained in reprint editions even today. For this reason, the hyphenated forms have been used throughout the remainder of the essay. In later books of the series, the hyphen was omitted.

[2] In the film the female lead is called Princess Ling Moy, but she is obviously intended to be the same character as the Fah Lo Suee of the books. As Mr. Lowndes remarked in a letter, the film character "no more resembles the one in the book than the lightning bug resembles the lightning."

[3] I know of no evidence to indicate that *Re-Enter* was written last. It seems highly unlikely that *Emperor* would have remained unpublished for two years, since it had both topicality and the accumulated fame of the Fu Manchu series in its favor. Although the Rohmer biography *Master of Villainy* refers to *Emperor* as the last work which Rohmer wrote, it seems likely that this honor actually belongs to one of the Fu Manchu short stories (see the Checklist on page 11).

The notice (in the Pyramid paperback?) that *Re-Enter Fu Manchu* is copyright by "the estate of Sax Rohmer" is doubly erroneous: Rohmer was still living in 1957, and in any case the copyright was taken out by Fawcett Publications rather

than the author.

[4] Hyphens again. "Si-Fan" is hyphenated throughout the series except in *Daughter of Fu Manchu*, where it is unhyphenated and italicized.

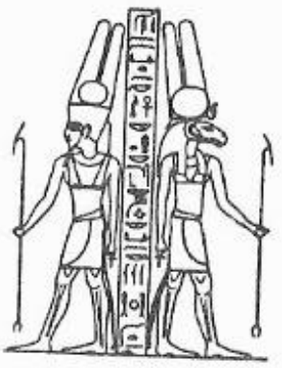
[5] But *Daughter* was completed early in 1930... .

[6] The five Fu Manchu comic-strip adaptations that I have seen were remarkably faithful to the original stories. In fact, in the best of these, a daily strip which appeared in U.S. newspapers in the early 1930s, much of the continuity and dialogue was taken directly from the books. ⊖

Addendum to The Lost "Eye" *(TRR #6) by R. E. Briney*

Although no copy of the script of *The Eye of Siva* has been found, the play is not entirely lost. Sax Rohmer utilized the setting, the essentials of the plot, and many of the characters of the play (most with altered names) in a long novelette called "The Voice of Káli" which he wrote while the play was running in London. The story was published in the 10 December 1923 issue of Doubleday's *Short Stories* magazine, and also as a three-part serial in *The Grand Magazine*, January through March 1924. So far as is known, it has not been reprinted since these original appearances.

In the transition from play to story, Siva has been replaced by Káli, the Smiling Death has become the Listening Death, and the Council of Seven and their agent, the Mandarin Yen Sun Yen, are now called simply the S. Group and the Mandarin K. The trick ending of the play is gone, and the rather skeletal plot has been fleshed out with additional action and somewhat more of an attempt at sensible explanations. Despite occasional descents into jingoism and an inconclusive ending, it is an entertaining story, and certainly worthy of being reprinted. Publishers take note.



A TALE OF "SECRET EGYPT"

by Sax Rohmer

The last abortive collaboration with which I have space to deal is a play called *Secret Egypt*. I began this play with Leon M. Lion, and we believed that a valuable property would result. Working far into the small hours, we evolved, I maintain, a fine first act. The second and third acts were less satisfactory, nor could we seem to infuse any life into them. Leon M. Lion finally washed his hands of the whole business.

"There's only one act, my dear fellow," he assured me. "It isn't a play---it's one act. And I make you a present of that!"

Some time later Jack de Leon offered me the "Q" Theatre for a week, with the additional inducement, since the theatre was temporarily closed, of rehearsing on the stage. My theatrical instincts being largely confined to scenery and lighting, this offer was too good to reject.

The first act in particular offered a fascinating problem. It was a room in an Egyptian house---a typical native interior. I had designed it; and, assisted by the marvellous man-of-all-work then attached to the "Q" Theatre, I also painted a great part of it. I lavished great care upon its lighting.

The second act was a stock set, a room in an hotel. The third, an excavator's hut in the ruins of an ancient Egyptian temple, was also of my design. Owing to the height of the temple wall, we found it necessary to paint this on stage. I recall one night when I crawled about over the canvas, charcoal in hand, drawing the vast outlines of Egyptian gods, while the resident scene-painter followed up with his paint brush!

We had several well-known names in the cast, and at the fall of the first curtain *Secret Egypt* was a pronounced success. A London manager called around with a view to its transfer to a West End theatre. A ghostly voice seemed to speak in my ear: "Only one act, my dear fellow!"

Yes, during rehearsals I had begun to share Leon M. Lion's opinion. I sent a message to the manager requesting him to see me at the end of the third and last act.

It were profitless to pursue this subject further...

The audience survived the second act, but their enthusiasm had visibly waned. In the third act---the excavator's hut---

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Extracted from the article "Nelson Keys and Captain Kettle" in THE EMPIRE NEWS (Manchester), 10 April 1938. Reprinted by permission of Mrs. Elizabeth Sax Rohmer.

really big fun began.

Some firm---I forget the name---had delivered at the very last moment a camp-bed, complete with mosquito netting. It was a flimsy affair, and the hero---the excavator---having dropped upon it in a drugged condition, was called upon by the text of the play to spring up, awakened by a draught from a broken window, and to rescue the heroine in the nick of time from the villain.

I was standing in the corner within three feet of this bed when the hero (Ion Swinley, once a fellow Artists Rifle) dropped on it. Ion Swinley was a heavy man. The bed immediately collapsed, broke in the middle---and I beheld my hero jammed in such a position that his dramatic return to life became a serious problem!

He saw me and, "I say!" said he, lying very still (he was supposed to be insensible), "What the devil shall I do?"

"Ease up quietly," I whispered. "I think the head of the bed will stand your weight."

A hectic scene was in progress between an Egyptian Pasha (D. A. Clarke-Smith) and the juvenile lady.

"I've got my feet clear," Swinley whispered presently---"but I am afraid the whole thing will crash when I jump out."

However, it didn't.

All that crashed was the play. ●

COMMENTARY *by R. E. Briney*

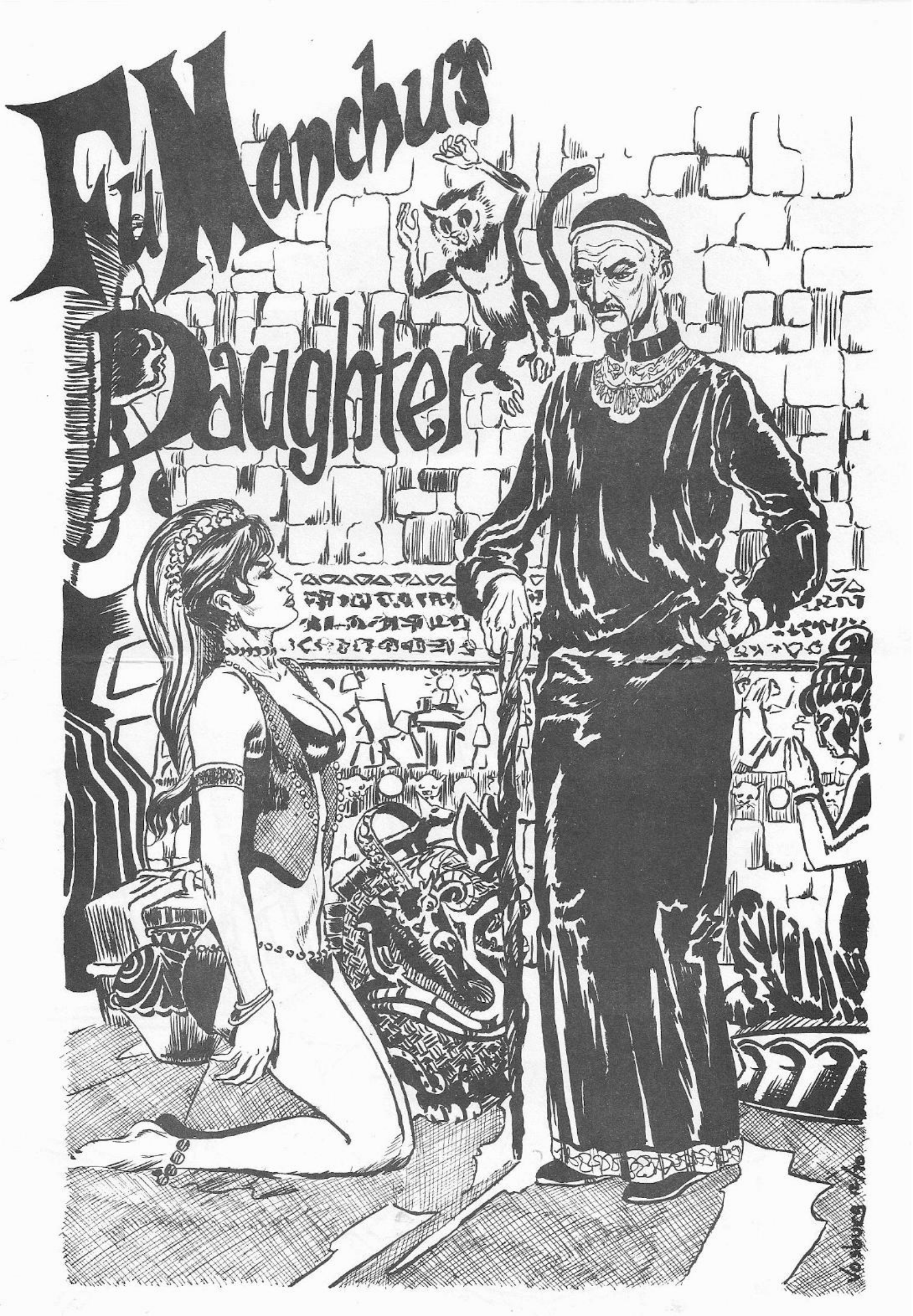
Secret Egypt, subtitled "a play of adventure by Sax Rohmer," opened at the "Q" Theatre in London on August 4, 1928, with the following cast:

Ali Mahmud	Osmund Willson
Hassan-es Sük	Forrester Harvey
Said	Arnold Walsh
Colonel Hilton	John H. Moore
Purvis	Colin Keith-Johnston
Miska al Mahdi	Lila Maravan
Celeste	Margaret Chatwin
Aswâmi Pasha	D. A. Clarke-Smith
"Jim" Dexter	Ion Swinley
Lady Howard St. Denis	Nancy Pawley
Bimbâshi	Arnold Walsh
Mabrûk	Arthur Brough.

The play was produced by D. A. Clarke-Smith. Whether it played the full week or only one or two nights is not known. No copy of the script is known to have survived. Needless to say, the play bore no relation to any of the stories in the book *Tales of Secret Egypt.*

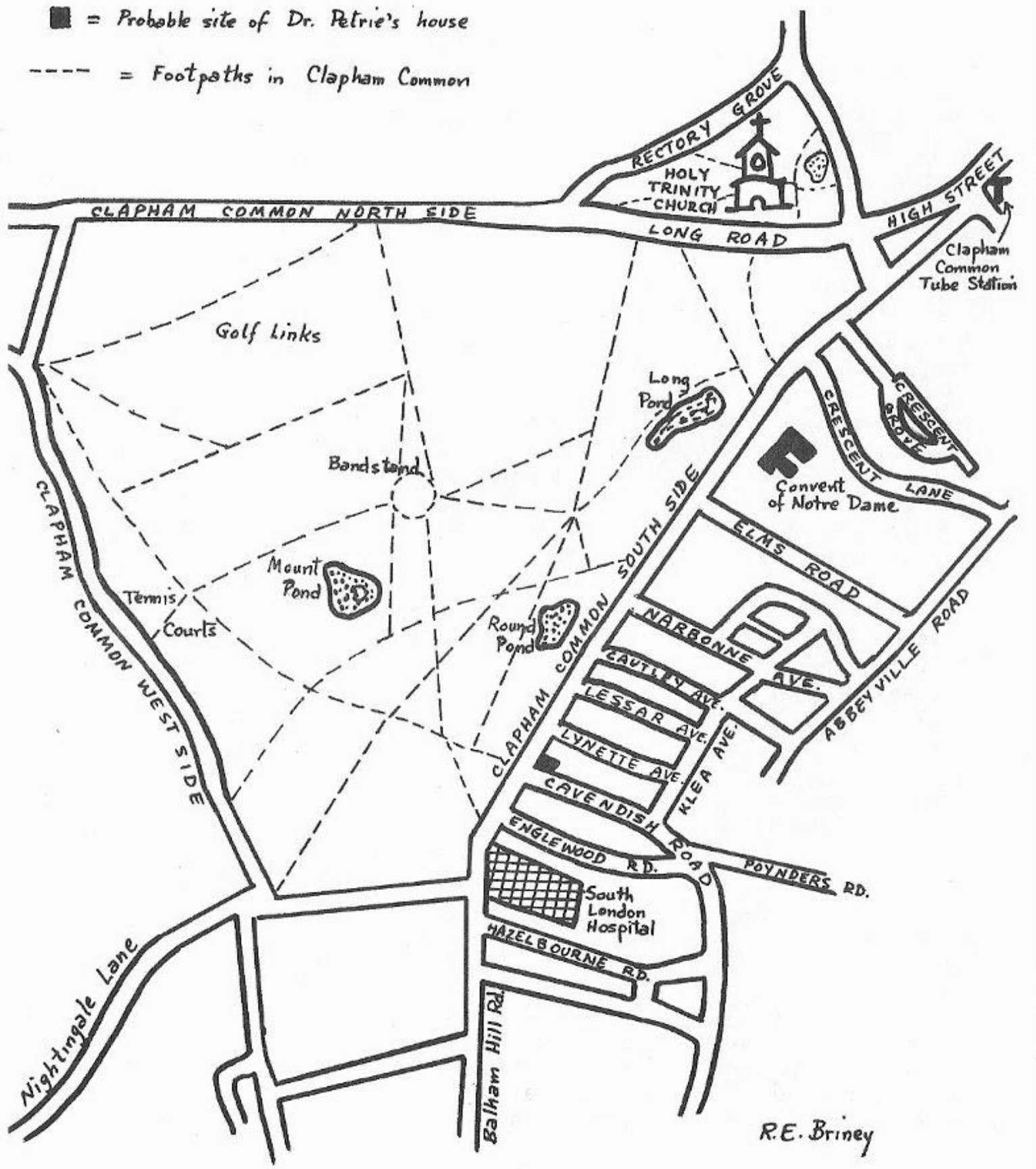
[The above playbill is taken from *Who's Who in the Theatre, 6th Edition,* 1930, published by Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, London.]

"Moris Klaw" by Cassin-Scott


Fu Manchus
Daughter

Sketch of

CLAPHAM COMMON (S.W.4)



Locating Dr. Petrie's Practice

by Julian Biggers

Dr. Petrie's house, with its malevolent common across the road, is a focal point for much of the action in the early Fu Manchu stories. In later adventures, after Petrie had sold his practice to Dr. Murray, Nayland Smith makes use of the house as a hide-out on two occasions. The scattered descriptions of the house and its environs provide a problem in literary detection: exactly where were the house and its neighboring common located?

Dr. Petrie describes his practice as being located in a not too distant, "beastly healthy," suburb of southwest London.[1] The area connects with London by a tramline that runs in front of his house, and a tube station to Charing Cross is nearby. His house faces the south side of a relatively large common.[2] The common with its clumps of elms and other trees is crossed by paths, lighted at night, and it has at least one pond. On the north side of the common is an edifice with a clock sufficiently large for the chimes to be heard by Petrie. The only street in the area which is specifically mentioned by name is Rectory Grove.

With these clues in mind, the enquiry was begun. And after several false starts, the search was brought to a close with the help of two references: Baedeker's *Guide to London*, 1911, and Sir Walter Besant's *London: South of the Thames*, published in 1912. The first reference furnished a map of the underground and major tram routes of the period. Using Charing Cross as a focus, the most likely underground route to the southwest was found to end at Clapham Common station.[3] A tramline was shown to follow the same course down Clapham Road, past the south side of the common, and continuing south to Tooting. The confluence of underground and tramline was sufficient reason to consult a more detailed reference.

Besant's excellent book provided a large-scale map of the region, along with a description of the suburbs located south of the Thames. Tube stations and environs other than Clapham Common were quickly eliminated because of the absence of a large common nearby. The accompanying sketch of Clapham Common shows the details needed for identification. The common, according to Besant, contains 220 acres of beautifully kept trees and grass. Some of the finest trees are at the Nightingale Lane side, many

of which are said to have been brought from abroad and planted by Captain Cook, whose wife passed her last years in the High Street. The ponds in the common---Mount Pond, Long Pond, and Round Pond---are mainly the result of gravel digging to provide foundation for roads in the area.

Clapham Common appears to fit the clues supplied by Petrie. Its Mount Pond is certainly close enough in name to the Mound Pond mentioned in THE RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU. In addition, a street called Rectory Grove converges with the north side of the common. The final confirmation comes from the clue of the clock which Petrie heard striking the hour. Holy Trinity Church stands at an angle at the north side of the common. Besant reproduces a print of the church made in 1812 showing a clock face as a feature of the steeple!

The exact location of Petrie's house is less easy to pin-point. Examination of the map suggests that the house was located somewhere between Cavendish Road and Narbonne Avenue on Clapham Common South Side. It can be deduced from the text of THE RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU[4] that the house was located on a corner, but whether on the north or south side of the street is not clear. Petrie describes a side entrance to his house, and recounts Smith's directing him to "cross from the corner of the next road." Later Petrie mentions that he "walked to the next corner, as directed." The use of "next" suggests that the house was situated on a corner. In this same episode, the question arises as to whether Petrie walked north or south to the next corner. Smith, in his directions, states, "I will go along the highroad and cross to the common a hundred yards up, where there is a pathway, as though homeward bound to the north side. Give me half a minute's start, then you proceed in an opposite direction." Petrie then describes walking to the corner, crossing to the common, and vaulting into the field "on my right." The logical inference is that Petrie walked south to the next corner. If this is what occurred, then the southernmost street leading off the common can be eliminated as a possible site for the house[5]; but any of the streets to the northward still merit consideration. Only a search of the registry of deeds in London could provide a final solution to the question of where the house was actually located.

NOTES

[1] Petrie gives the bulk of the clues in THE INSIDIOUS DR. FU-MANCHU and THE RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU. The information that the practice is located in the southwest of London is provided by Shan Greville in DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU.

[2] In THE RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU Petrie tells Mrs. Hewett's maid that he will take 15 minutes to arrive at her house on the north side of the common. This suggests that he will have a walk

of from half a mile to a mile in crossing the common. Partial distances mentioned in RETURN also suggest that the common is a large open space.

[3] One other route ends in what would be considered south-west London; however, lack of a tramline and other characteristics eliminates it from further consideration. Clapham Station is less than four miles from Charing Cross, making it a "not too remote" suburb of London.

[4] Pyramid edition, pages 25-6.

[5] The editor of this *Review* has raised the question of just which was the last street on the south facing the common in 1911-1914, the years of Petrie's tenure in the house. The map in Besant's book turns out to have been drawn in 1898. This map shows Cavendish Road as the last street on the south. On the other hand, a map from *Bacon's Pocket Atlas of London*, not dated but *circa* 1920, shows a street called Englewood Road between Cavendish and the south end of the common. [A copy of this *Atlas* was supplied by TRR subscriber Brian Hughes. --Ed.] A comparison of the two maps showed that there had been considerable subdivision in this part of London in the twenty-odd year interval. If Englewood Road was constructed after 1914, then Petrie's house would be located somewhere between Lynette and Narbonne. In the meantime, the author would like to suggest the corner of Cavendish Road as the site of Petrie's residence. Besant noted that the home of Henry Cavendish, "the Newton of Chemistry," stood on this corner. It was here in the early 19th century that Cavendish conducted his famous experiment of determining the earth's density. Certainly it is a fitting location for a man so highly esteemed by Fu Manchu for his chemical and medical talents.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sax Rohmer was undoubtedly very familiar with the area around Clapham Common. Some three quarters of a mile south of the common is a short street called Oakmead Road. According to the biography MASTER OF VILLAINY, a flat in Oakmead Road served as headquarters for a Bohemian group of which the young Sax Rohmer was a member. And it was while strolling through Clapham Common itself, on a spring evening in 1905, that Rohmer first met Rose Elizabeth Knox, the girl who was later to become his wife. What more natural than that the Common should play an important role in his fiction? ●

The Bowling Green University Popular Press has published *The Mystery Writer's Art*, an anthology of essays on mystery fiction, edited by Francis M. Nevins, Jr. On pages 42-77 you will find "Sax Rohmer: An Informal Survey" by R. E. Briney. This is an expanded and revised version of the article which appeared in the first issue of *The Rohmer Review*. It includes a chronological checklist of the U.S. and British first editions of all of Sax Rohmer's books.

The collection also contains essays on Poe by R. A. W. Lowndes and J. R. Christopher, a survey of the works of Henry Wade by Charles Shibuk, an analysis of the Drury Lane quartet by Francis M. Nevins, Jr., and thought-provoking contributions by Jacques Barzun, John Dickson Carr, Ross Macdonald, and others. Two essays exploring some connections between mystery fiction and sf/fantasy are by Frank D. McSherry, who is also responsible for the excellent cover design on the book. The book is priced at $3.50 paperbound and $8.95 clothbound. Available from Professor Ray Browne, 101 University Hall, Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403.

Bowling Green has also published *In Search of Dr. Thorndyke* by Norman Donaldson, a biographical and critical study of R. Austin Freeman and his famous detective character. The book is impeccably researched and written in a lively style, and is unreservedly recommended. (Prices: $3.00 and $7.95, from the address given above.)

Planned for future publication are the long-awaited biography, *Master of Villainy*, by Elizabeth Sax Rohmer and Cay Van Ash (currently in production), an anthology of science fiction criticism called *The Other Side of Realism*, and a book-length study of Philo Vance. W. O. G. Lofts' book on Leslie Charteris and The Saint is also under consideration.

Another recently published book which is a must for all enthusiasts of mystery fiction is *Nightwebs* by Cornell Woolrich. This is a mammoth collection of stories, some not previously published. The book was edited by Francis M. Nevins, Jr., who also contributed a long and fascinating biographical and critical study of Woolrich and, with the aid of Hal Knott and William Thailing, a comprehensive bibliography of Woolrich's writings. The jacket painting, reminiscent of the work of Ivan Albright, is by Frank D. McSherry. (Harper & Row, $8.95.)

Bookfinger, the publisher of the first U.S. editions of three Sax Rohmer titles (THE SINS OF SEVERAC BABLON, THE EXPLOITS OF CAPTAIN O'HAGAN, and THE ORCHARD OF TEARS---all still available, priced at $4.50, $4.00, and $4.50, respectively, to TRR subscribers

continued on Inside Back Cover

Fu Manchu
Checklist

by *R. E. Briney*

As an accompaniment to R. A. W. Lowndes' survey of the Fu Manchu books, we present this checklist covering all of Sax Rohmer's writings about Dr. Fu Manchu and Nayland Smith. The books are listed first, followed by the short stories and non-fiction. For each title, the first British and first U.S. book editions are listed, together with information on the original magazine or newspaper serializations and such other notes as seem appropriate. Reprint editions are not mentioned; these will be covered in a comprehensive bibliography to be published at a later date.

It should be noted that the first three Fu Manchu volumes were originally written and published as series of complete-in-one-issue magazine stories. For the magazine appearances, only inclusive dates are given; details of the individual episodes are omitted. (For much of the information on British magazine serializations I am indebted to W. O. G. Lofts.)

In the following list, publishers' names and magazine titles are sometimes abbreviated. Full names are given at the end of the checklist. British publishers and magazines are indicated by the symbol °.

∇	THE MYSTERY OF DR. FU-MANCHU	°Methuen	26 Jun 1913
	as THE INSIDIOUS DR. FU-MANCHU	McBride,Nast	Sep 1913

First published as a series of 10 stories under the running title "Fu-Manchu" in °*The Story-Teller*, October 1912 to July 1913, and in *Collier's*, 15 February to 28 June 1913. [The first story, "The Zayat Kiss," was begun in 1911 but was not completed until the following year.]

∇	THE RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU	McBride	Feb 1916
	as THE DEVIL DOCTOR	°Methuen	2 Mar 1916

First published as a series of 10 stories under the running title "Fu Manchu and Company" in *Collier's*, 21 November 1914 to 4 December 1915 (at approximately monthly intervals) and in °*The New Magazine*, June 1915 to March 1916.

∇	THE SI-FAN MYSTERIES	°Methuen	3 May 1917
	as THE HAND OF FU-MANCHU	McBride	May 1917

First published as a series of 9 stories with the running title "The Si-Fan Mysteries" in *Collier's* between 8 April 1916 and 2 June 1917; eight of the stories appeared in °*The Story-Teller* between September 1916 and December 1917.

∇	THE BOOK OF FU-MANCHU	McBride	Feb 1929
		°Hurst & Blackett	1929

British subtitle: "A complete and detailed account of the amazing criminal activities of this sinister Chinaman." The British edition contains the first three Fu Manchu books; the U.S. edition contains these, printed from the original McBride plates, plus *The Golden Scorpion*, in which Fu Manchu makes a brief anonymous appearance.

∇	DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU	Doubleday, Doran	Mar 1931
		°Cassell	Aug 1931

Published as a 12-part serial in *Collier's*, 8 March to 24 May 1930. No British serialization known.

∇	THE MASK OF FU MANCHU	The Crime Club	Oct 1932
		°Cassell	1933

Serialized in *Collier's*, 7 May to 23 July 1932, and in the London °*Daily Herald*, 6 September to 31 October 1932. The Crime Club edition was illustrated by John Richard Flanagan, a fine artist who illustrated all of Rohmer's stories in *Collier's* from 1929 to 1935. [He also did illustrations for *Blue Book* and for the imitation Fu Manchu pulp magazine *The Mysterious Wu Fang*.]

∇	THE BRIDE OF FU MANCHU	°Cassell	Oct 1933
	as FU MANCHU'S BRIDE	The Crime Club	Oct 1933

Serialized in *Collier's*, 6 May to 8 July 1933, and in °*Ideas and Town Talk*, 7 October to 23 December 1933.

∇	THE TRAIL OF FU MANCHU	The Crime Club	Sep 1934
		°Cassell	1934

Serialized in *Collier's*, 28 April to 14 July 1934, and in the °*London Daily Sketch*, 25 June to 6 July 1934.

∇	PRESIDENT FU MANCHU	The Crime Club	May 1936
		°Cassell	Aug 1936

Serialized in *Collier's*, 29 February to 16 May 1936, under the title "The Invisible President." No British serialization known.

∇	THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU	The Crime Club	Jun 1939
		°Cassell	1939

Serialized in *Collier's*, 1 April to 3 June 1939, and in °*The Empire News* (Manchester), 4 June to 20 August 1939.

∇	THE ISLAND OF FU MANCHU	The Crime Club	Feb 1941
		°Cassell	1941

Serialized in *Liberty*, 16 November 1940 to 1 February 1941, under the title "Fu Manchu and the Panama Canal." No British serialization known.

∇	SHADOW OF FU MANCHU	The Crime Club	Aug 1948
		°Herbert Jenkins	1949

Serialized in *Collier's*, 8 May to 12 June 1948. No British serialization known. [Some editions have a "The" on the front of the title, but it shouldn't be there.]

∇	RE-ENTER FU MANCHU	pb Gold Medal #s684	Jly 1957
	as RE-ENTER DR. FU MANCHU	°Herbert Jenkins	Aug 1957

∇	EMPEROR FU MANCHU	°Herbert Jenkins	Apr 1959
		pb Gold Medal #s929	Oct 1959

The previous two books were never published in hardcover in the U.S. No serial versions.

Other than the episodes which constitute the first three Fu Manchu books, there are only three Fu Manchu short stories. Rohmer wrote these for the Sunday supplement magazine *This Week* in 1957-1959. Some years later they were reprinted in the *Edgar Wallace Mystery Magazine*.

The Eyes of Fu Manchu	TW	6 & 13 Oct 1957
	°EWMM #18	Jan 1966
The Night Fu Manchu Learned Fear	TW	9 Mar 1958
as The Word of Fu Manchu	°EWMM #19	Feb 1966
Fu Manchu and the Frightened Redhead	TW	1 Feb 1959
as The Mind of Fu Manchu	°EWMM #20	Mar 1966

It may safely be conjectured that Sax Rohmer would have preferred the alternate titles on the last two stories, although the third story was originally submitted for publication under the title "Secret of the Flying Saucer."

In addition to the three Fu Manchu short stories, there are three stories in which Nayland Smith appears without his customary antagonist:

§ The Blue Monkey — in THE HAUNTING OF LOW FENNEL (°Pearson, 1920)

Never published in the U.S. Smith and Petrie are not mentioned by name, but there is no doubt as to the identities of the nameless narrator and his pseudonymous friend "Mr. East."

§ The Mark of the Monkey — *Collier's* 27 Jun 1931

Smith and Petrie on holiday in Devon, after the events chronicled in *The Hand of Fu-Manchu*.

§ The Turkish Yataghan — *Collier's* 23 Apr 1932

Narrated by Shan Greville, who also narrates *Daughter of Fu Manchu*. Probably takes place between *Daughter* and *Mask*.

Finally, there are three non-fiction pieces about Fu Manchu:

¶ Meet Dr. Fu Manchu — in MEET THE DETECTIVE (ed. Cecil Madden) Telegraph Press 1935, °Allen & Unwin 1935

This was written as a radio talk for the B.B.C.

¶ The Birth of Fu Manchu — *The Empire News* (Manchester) 30 Jan 1938

This was the first installment of the "Pipe Dreams," a series of twelve autobiographical articles written in 1936.

¶ How Fu Manchu Was Born — *This Week* 29 Sep 1957

Written as an accompaniment to the short story "The Eyes of Fu Manchu." Reprinted in *The Rohmer Review* #2, Jan 1969.

The most authoritative account of the genesis of Fu Manchu is that contained in the biography *Master of Villainy*. This is based on a conversation with Rohmer in the late 1930s, and has none of the fanciful embroidery of the articles listed above.

A list of Sax Rohmer's publishers will be found on page 28.

ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1916. He read his first science fiction magazine in 1928, became active in the science fiction fan world in the mid-1930s, and has been writing and editing science fiction and fantasy (as well as other types of fiction and non-fiction) since 1940. He is the author of *The Duplicated Man* (with James Blish; 1959) and *Believers' World* (1961), both published by Avalon Books. From 1963 until early 1971 he edited the now-defunct *Magazine of Horror* and a succession of companion magazines including *Startling Mystery Stories*. His lengthy and perceptive reviews and editorial essays in these magazines were highly regarded by enthusiasts of fantasy and mystery fiction, and they will be sorely missed, as will the magazines themselves. [His essay "The Contributions of Edgar Allan Poe" can be found in the anthology *The Mystery Writer's Art:* see "Book News" elsewhere in this issue.] Mr. Lowndes currently lives in New Jersey. He is a member of The Scandalous Bohemians, a Scion Society of The Baker Street Irregulars.

JULIAN L. BIGGERS is Professor of Education and Assistant Dean of the College of Education at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. He writes: "I teach graduate courses in counseling and educational psychology. I have been a fan of Rohmer's since reading *The Island of Fu Manchu* in 1941 at age 11. I became an active book collector in the early 1960s, though I had a few paperbacks from the 1950s already in my possession. I regret not saving the issues of *This Week* with Rohmer stories; unfortunately, hindsight will not bring them back."

DOUGLAS A. ROSSMAN was born in Wisconsin 35 years ago. By profession he is a zoologist, specializing in snake evolution. He holds a B.A. degree from Southern Illinois University and a Ph.D. from the University of Florida, and is currently an Associate Professor of Zoology at Louisiana State University. Other academic interests are botany and anthropology, the latter connected with a life-long interest in North American Indians. He lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with his wife Nita, son Chuck and daughter Kathy (aged 10 and 7, respectively), and a pet beagle named Dorothy. {And when I visited him in January 1969 he kept a somnolent corn snake in a glass case in his den. -Ed.} He is a member of Zero Population Growth and the Sierra Club, and is part-owner of a 136-acre nature preserve. He founded *The Rohmer Review* early in 1968 and was the magazine's editor and publisher during its first two years of existence. In addition to Rohmer's works, he is interested in the Oz books and in fantasy literature in general.

(OUR CONTRIBUTORS, cont.) JOHN HARWOOD was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1913. He graduated from high school during the Depression and after a couple of years of irregular work found a job in a textile mill. He has worked in various mills in New Bedford ever since. John is probably best known as a commentator on the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs. He has been writing about Burroughs since 1947 and has appeared in most of the Burroughs journals. His book *The Literature of Burroughsiana*, a mammoth annotated checklist of material about Burroughs and his writings, was privately published in 1963. Of his early contacts with Sax Rohmer's works, he says:

"I remember the first of the *Collier's* serials I read: *The Day the World Ended*, in 1929. At that time I had already read the first three Fu Manchu books from the public library, and perhaps one or two other titles. Starting with this story, I read all the novels which were serialized in *Collier's* from that time on. Both my mother and my father liked the Rohmer tales, and whenever one of the stories appeared in the magazine there was a race to see who would get to read it first.

"My father's employer used to get *Collier's* on Fridays, and when he finished with the magazine he gave it to my father to bring home at noontime on Saturdays. We would rush through lunch, and the first one to get to the magazine would be all set for the afternoon. I always used to save the best until last, reading the other stories and articles first and ending with the Rohmer story.

"I remember one time when there was a particularly exciting serial running I finished eating quickly and went to get the magazine. I couldn't find it anywhere, and almost turned the house upside down searching for it. Later I discovered that my father had been sitting on it so that he could get to it first.

"Another time he fell asleep while reading the magazine, so my mother eased it out of his hands without awakening him and put the last week's issue on his lap. When he woke up he started reading again and got through a couple of paragraphs before he realized that it was a back issue.

"On Sunday evenings we would tune in to *The Collier's Hour* on the radio and listen to a dramatization of the installment we had read just the previous day." ●

Letters to Limehouse

From MRS. B. D. GOLDBERG, Arlington, Virginia:

Because of the mention of a bird-eating spider in Sax Rohmer's "Live Instruments of Villainy" and in Dr. Rossman's "Commentary" (TRR #6) I thought you might find the following information of interest. In a recent Pyramid paperback, *Ghostly by Gaslight*, edited by Sam Moskowitz and Alden H. Norton, there is a story by Emile Erckmann (1822-1899) and Alexandre Chatrian (1826-1890) called "The Spider of Guyana." The action takes place in Spinbronn, Germany. One of the characters describes a spider found in the swampy forests of Guyana that spins an immense web to trap birds, insects, and small animals. Spinbronn, a health spa, has a hot spring flowing from a large cavern. Eventually, after all sorts of animal and human bones are found in the river, it is discovered that the cavern is the abode of an enormous spider, with a body as large as a man's. This is one spider that distinctly wasn't satisfied with birds, and that Fu Manchu might have "enjoyed."

The subject of the cover of No. 6 is, of course, Thoth, the god of the moon, patron of writing, learning, and the sciences. He is usually depicted, as on the cover, as an ibis-headed figure but is also sometimes shown as a dog-headed baboon. Naturally he was the author of the legendary *Book of Thoth* which is so important to Antony Ferrara in *Brood of the Witch Queen*. It also plays a very large part in the 1932 movie *The Mummy*, in which Boris Karloff plays an ancient priest of Isis who is brought back to life when a portion of the *Book of Thoth* is read aloud in the presence of his mummified body.

From JAMES WADE, Seoul, Korea:

The letter purportint to mix Holmesian and Fu-Manchurian strains ["Letter to Sherlock" by J. L. Biggers, TRR #6] recalls other celebrated borrowings. When I was a kid and the old Jack Armstrong radio serial had a huge following, Jack appeared as a character in "Return to Mars," an sf serial in *American Boy* magazine by Carl H. Claudy, who otherwise used his own stock characters in the tale. And of course the later comic strip superheroes made this "guest star" system rather farcical.

The article about the Rohmer play with Cathleen Nesbitt proved a real *memento mori*, for I had just seen her last screen portrayal, as Richard Burton's senile, bedfast mother in *Staircase* ---a pitiful and horrifying vignette of helpless old age. Was 1923 really that long ago? I think Miss Nesbitt died last year, if I recall the *Variety* necrology correctly.

From JOHN NIEMINSKI, Park Forest, Illinois:

Re: your article on Sax Rohmer's play *The Eye of Siva*---if you're interested, and have the time, energy, and money to pursue the matter, I believe you can obtain a type-script by writing to the Lord Chamberlain's Office in London. It is my understanding that until very recently either censorship or copyright laws in Britain required the filing with that office of copies of any play scheduled for publis showing, and that copies can be had. It was from this source that two Sherlockian items (Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Crown Diamond* and William Gillette's *The Painful Predicament of Sherlock Holmes*) were obtained, leading to their publication in the 1950s.

I have some Fu Manchu issues of *Collier's* and *This Week* to trade for sf fanzine wants. Know anyone who might be interested?

The Office of the Lord Chamberlain was closed some years ago. An agent has been making enquiries in London, but so far it has not been possible to determine if the files of the obsolete office have been preserved, or who has present custody of them if they do still exist. However, the investigation is continuing.

CHECKLIST, continued from page 24:

Sax Rohmer's publishers:

McBride, Nast & Company, New York
Robert M. McBride & Co., New York
Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., Garden City, N.Y.
The Crime Club (Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y.)
Gold Medal Books (Fawcett Publishing Co., Greenwich, Conn.)

Methuen & Co., Ltd., London
Cassell & Co., Ltd., London
Hurst & Blackett Ltd., London
Herbert Jenkins Ltd., London.

All thirteen of the Fu Manchu books have been reprinted in paperback by Pyramid Books, and new printings are made periodically in order to keep the books in print.

(BOOK NEWS, continued from page 20) only), has branched out. His latest publication is the first U.S. edition of GREY SHAPES by Jack Mann, a fantasy novel which has up to now been almost legendary in its rarity. It is part of the series of books about the detective Gregory George Gordon Green, known as "Gees," whose cases all seem to involve supernatural happenings. It is giving away no secret to mention that GREY SHAPES concerns an encounter with werewolves. The book is in the same fine format as the Rohmer volumes, and is priced at $5.00, from: Bookfinger, Box 487, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, N.Y. 10009.

Mr. Amedeo, the man behind Bookfinger, announces that two further Jack Mann titles are in production. And after them---hold your hats!---the first U.S. edition of SALUTE TO BAZARADA AND OTHER STORIES.

The latest in Luther Norris's line of chapbooks is *Baker Street Ballads* by Charles E. Lauterbach, edited and with an introduction by Edward S. Lauterbach. This is a collection of 20 poems, most of them humorous, on Sherlockian themes. All of them are entertaining, and the numerous illustrations by Danish artist Henry Lauritzen (whose portrait of Fu Manchu appeared in TRR's second issue) are delightful. Price: $3.00.

Copies of earlier publications, such as Harry Hartman's THE HOLY QUIRE and the portfolio of illustrations, FU MANCHU AND COMPANY by Roy Hunt, may still be available. And it is about time for the appearance of another *Pontine Dossier*. All of these are priced at $3.00 each, from Luther Norris, 3844 Watseka Ave., Culver City, California 90230. ●

Many of our readers will already have learned of the death of August Derleth, on July 4, 1971. Mr. Derleth was 62 years old. In addition to being one of the most prolific of American authors, and a distinguished poet and regionalist, he was a champion of fantasy and weird fiction. As co-founder and chief motive force of Arkham House, he was responsible for the publication of many excellent volumes of fantasy fiction and verse by both new and established writers. His passing leaves a void that will not soon, if ever, be filled.

THE ROHMER REVIEW No. 7 August 1971

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Photo on page 13 by Jack Blake, London; courtesy of Luther Norris.
Illustration on pages 14-15 by Michael Vosburg.

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David Braveman

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